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Research in urban history: a review of recent theses

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This review consists of a broad, uncritical survey of recent unpublished doctoral theses. Unlike previous years, where a mixture of British and non-British dissertations have been discussed, this year all the studies under consideration were completed at British universities, mostly in 1995. As before, the theses mentioned were chosen because of their focus on aspects of urban historical research, whilst the short descriptions are based on the abstracts published in the *Aslib Index to Theses* [ASLIB]. Urban history, or research with a strong urban bias, would appear to be in a healthy state in Britain and there was no shortage of studies to choose from, a total of thirty-nine receiving attention in this report. This focus on recent research in one country provides the opportunity to take stock and make some observations about current trends as well as allowing comparisons to be drawn with previous years where there is both continuity and evidence of change. To complement this focus on Britain, the next report will assess the state of urban history research outside the United Kingdom, and especially in North America.

Women's issues, a prominent subject in recent years, is again well represented. Around a quarter of the studies listed fell into this category, with topics covered including theatre, crime, wage inequality, politics and fashion, with research focusing on geographically diverse locations and almost every chronological period from the classical world to the 1950s. Though slightly less significant than in previous years, leisure and culture – both high and low – remain popular areas for study as do the urban economy, the family and population change. Whilst these areas suggest considerable continuity with recent trends, studies of urban administration show a change of emphasis away from party politics and personalities towards the wider issue of civil society, and from the policing and reform of the physical environment to the policing and reform of individuals. New, or rapidly expanding, subjects for research include medical history, and in particular the voluntary hospitals of eighteenth-century England, consumption, and the redevelopment of Britain's cities in the last twenty-five years. On the other hand, there are a number of topics popular in the recent past which feature less prominently in this year's selection. In particular, both London and the nineteenth-century middle class – two areas which have predominated in the last two reports – are barely represented here, a state of affairs probably related to the general dearth of 'new cultural history' themes which have tended to concentrate in these areas. As the new cultural history and metropolitan history are particularly popular with North American scholars, this suggests one field in which there may be a distinct methodological divide between Britain and the rest

of the English-speaking world. There are also differences apparent in the temporal and spatial focus of this cohort of British theses. In terms of chronology, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries still dominate the study of urban history; however, the current selection includes a growing number of studies concerned with the twentieth century, especially developments at the local level, whilst the study of the medieval and early modern periods is less well represented than in the recent past. A more worrying trend is the geographical limitation of the work under review. Less than a quarter of the theses in the report deal with non-British locations, none address urban developments in the United States and there are no international comparisons attempted.

The first batch of theses in this year's selection are concerned with the way families and populations negotiated the impact of unstable demographic and economic systems. S. SCOTT, 'Demographic study of Penrith, Cumberland, 1557–1812, with particular reference to famine, plague and smallpox' (Ph.D., University of Liverpool, 1995) [ASLIB] utilizes time series analysis, supported by the conventional demographic techniques of aggregative analysis and family reconstitution, to model the underlying dynamics of a population living in crisis for most of the period under discussion. This study shows that Penrith, a marginal community affected by outright famine, regular smallpox epidemics and devastating plague visitations produced a homeostatic regime where famine, malnutrition and epidemic diseases acted, particularly on childhood mortality, to regulate the balance between resources and population size. However, this 'Malthusian trap' was finally broken in the second half of the eighteenth century by improvements in agriculture and transport and the development of Penrith as a market centre which together allowed sustainable population growth. D.P. TIDSWELL, 'Geographical mobility, occupational changes and family relationships in early nineteenth century Scotland' (Ph.D., University of Edinburgh, 1994) [ASLIB] considers how such economic change in rural areas affected the people of Scotland and, in particular, the way in which transitions through life were moulded by individuals' and families' strategies and historical circumstances. Drawing on the precognitions of the Lord Advocate's Department, a hitherto under-utilized body of criminal records, the thesis focuses primarily on the occupational and social status of people who moved geographically. Particular emphasis is placed on an analysis of those who moved between rural and urban places, and to and from towns and cities, especially Glasgow, with consideration given to the usefulness of concepts of regional production and regional identity in our understanding of mobility and personal strategies. Though more concerned with family living arrangements than spatial mobility, E.A. DEL PINO, 'Ageing and modernisation: the living arrangements of elderly individuals in a Spanish community: Tarrega (1897–1992)' (Ph.D., University of Cambridge, 1996) [ASLIB] does touch on similar themes. The aim of the thesis is to test the model that the higher the degree of modernization the lower the significance of intergenerational co-residence and intergenerational contact between elderly parents and their married children. Its findings suggest that in this Catalan town during the phase of intensive modernization – between 1897 and 1936 – co-residence between elderly parents and their married children actually increased, a trend most pronounced amongst the leading modernizers (entrepreneurs in the secondary and tertiary sector), possibly as part of a strategy for coping with the

demands of family businesses. However, in the post-Civil War period a process of nuclearization did take place, with a substantial decrease in the percentage of elderly individuals living with their married children, and a commensurate increase in elderly individuals living in solitary households, though this did not produce either residential or social segregation.

Investigation into the ways in which economic change produced a range of coping strategies among spatially and temporally diverse communities is now a well-established area of study, but the next selection of theses explore a topic still woefully under-researched – the centrality of the relationship between production and consumption. S. PRYKE, 'The eighteenth century furniture trade in Edinburgh: a study based on documentary sources' (Ph.D., University of St Andrews, 1995) [ASLIB] draws together production and consumption in a study of the Edinburgh furniture trade, in which the Incorporation of Wrights and Masons – or Mary's Chapter – played a vital part. As, for most of the eighteenth century, the Incorporation controlled the lives of everyone working in the trade it provides a useful framework within which gender relations, politics, freemasonry, the roles, status and training of apprentices and journeymen and the charitable function of the trade could be investigated. This assessment of the productive milieu is supported by a discussion of the furniture itself, its makers and their patrons which emphasizes the importance of imported English, Dutch and French goods, as well as the indigenous product, to satisfy the city's demand. Similar issues of production, distribution and consumption are explored in H.A. PALMER, 'The myth and reality of haute couture: consumption, social function and taste in Toronto, 1945–1963' (Ph.D., University of Brighton, 1994) [ASLIB] which employs a multidisciplinary approach that weds material culture with oral history, film and printed archival research to illustrate the ways clothing helped to shape cultural identity in post-war Toronto. Focusing on the wardrobes of elite English-Canadian women, it suggests dress not only reflected status within a social world driven by etiquette but performed a necessary role in the performance and development of women's social and charitable functions. The defining of a social and cultural identity through haute couture in turn affected the Canadian retailing sector, creating challenges for buyers and distributors and impacting significantly on department stores, boutiques and customers. This modernization of the retail sector is central to A.F. ALEXANDER, 'The evolution of multiple retailing in Britain 1870–1950: a geographical analysis' (Ph.D., University of Exeter, 1994) [ASLIB]. Drawing on data from trade directories and censuses and melding these with material from the business archives of the multiple retailers, it presents much new evidence on the patterns of retailing which emerged during the rise to pre-eminence of the multiple shop. Rejecting the demand-led explanation for the spatial evolution of chain stores, the thesis adopts a more comprehensive analysis of the processes involved to suggest that the forces controlling geographical evolution were far more diverse than is commonly acknowledged. In particular common 'pathways to growth' developed based, in part, on changes in financial, legal and managerial organization creating distinctive regional and sub-regional retail systems.

Although research on the retailing, purchasing and use of consumer goods remains at an early stage, leisure continues to play an important part in our understanding of British consumption patterns over the past two hundred years. Three recent theses provide useful insights into the successful development and

subsequent failure of three icons of popular culture – the circus, the British film industry and the seaside holiday. M.S. KWINT, 'Astley's amphitheatre and the early circus in England, 1768–1830' (D.Phil., University of Oxford, 1994) [ASLIB] describes how Astley's in Lambeth merged trick riding with traditional acrobatics to create the modern circus and dominate the metropolitan market for much of the nineteenth century. The first part of the study shows how Astley's developed, highlighting the rivalry with Royal Circus, the introduction of stages and 'hippodramas', the social and economic structure of the circus, and Astley's personal struggles with the law and respectability. The second part moves into cultural history to explore the Astelian spectacle – its presentation, marketing, influence on graphic design, theatre architecture and stagecraft, its blending of high, low and even archaic cultures and the generally conservative and imperialistic worldview it presented to its audiences. The success of the British circus in the nineteenth century is now largely accepted, but J. SEDGWICK, 'The British film industry and the market for feature films in Britain, 1932–37' (Ph.D., London Guildhall University, 1995) [ASLIB] faces a more difficult task in attempting to rehabilitate the image of this key urban leisure industry. Taking as its starting-point the growing realization that British films were successful in meeting the Hollywood challenge, the aim of the study is to refute the impression presented by film historians of the 1930s as a period of low budget, low quality production forced on domestic audiences as a consequence of the 1927 Cinematograph Act. Thus an Index of Film Popularity was constructed from the exhibition records of approximately ninety leading London West End and provincial city cinemas to test the popularity of British made films in the period. This shows that as many as sixty domestic films a year – especially those produced by Gaumont British-Gainsborough, British and Dominion and London Films – were genuinely popular with British audiences for part or all of the 1930s and that their success in these first run houses guaranteed them a showing further down the exhibition chain. Whilst Sedgwick is keen to re-present the business record of a major leisure industry in a more favourable light, J.C. DEMETRIADI, 'English and Welsh seaside resorts: 1950–1974, with special reference to Blackpool and Margate' (Ph.D., University of Lancaster, 1994) [ASLIB] is concerned with an industry in decline, failing to meet the challenges posed by affluence and a new transport revolution. The product of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century changes in income and passenger transit, post-war seaside resorts had to cope with the rapid growth in car ownership which allowed greater mobility and flexibility whilst on holiday, as well as the increasing length of paid holidays and the greater choice available to holidaymakers. The central contention of the thesis is that, though the lure of package holidays in the sun did play a part in the decline of domestic resort holidays, the most serious problems were 'home grown'. In particular, the author identifies successive government legislation of the accommodation industry, conflict and competition between resorts, missed opportunities and the image and identity of the resorts as contributing factors to the decline of a great British tradition. Moving from popular culture to 'high' culture, D.J. CASH, 'Access to museum culture: the British Museum from 1753 to 1836' (Ph.D., University of Cambridge, 1995) [ASLIB] raises interesting questions about the nature of a museum, the public, and the ways in which that public should be served by a new cultural institution. Created in 1753 from Sir Hans Sloane's legacy and the British Museum Act, the collection was to benefit mankind and to be for the use

of the public, but the implementation and interpretation of these instructions were left in the hands of the governing board. The trustees defined the British Museum as an institution for the learned to pursue research and knowledge, with access hedged with restrictions, leading to the creation of a very small public. The study analyses the effects of the trustees' definition and their attempts to provide greater access in the wake of public and political criticism which led to an increasing role for Parliament as an arbiter of the museum's affairs.

As suggested earlier, gender is a dominant theme in the dissertations examined in this report. Continuing the interest in popular and high culture explored in the preceding studies, three theses chart the role and experience of women in the English theatre from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. S. TOMLINSON, *'Theatrical women: the female actor in English theatre and drama, 1603–1670'* (Ph.D., University of Cambridge, 1996) [ASLIB] examines the processes of cultural and literary change which made it possible for women to act in the theatres of Restoration England. The study highlights the importance of innovations made by two foreign queens, Anna and Henrietta Maria, whose court performances in masques and pastoral drama produced an intense literary focus on women as actors, patrons and audience, and provoked conflicting ideas about the boundaries of female theatrical involvement during the first seventy years of the seventeenth century. It analyses the imaging of women as actors in a variety of Jacobean and Caroline texts, including four 'experiments' in female performance from the latter period as well as Restoration comedy and the tragedy of John Ford. The successful entry of women on to the London stage created new debates for the eighteenth century, some of which are explored in K.A. CROUCH, *'Attitudes towards actresses in eighteenth-century Britain'* (D.Phil., University of Oxford, 1995) [ASLIB]. Based on cases studies of four controversial leading actresses and their presentation in periodicals, pamphlets, biographies, portraits and prints, this study assesses the ways in which society articulated ideas about standards of feminine behaviour and the appropriateness of women working in such a public area as the theatre. Starting from the position that actresses were dangerous associates with an equivocal social position, the case studies indicate the intricacy of social norms and patterns and the ways eighteenth-century society appreciated sexual morality and social respectability, marriage and the family and the viability of women as actress-managers. The theme of women as producers as well as players forms a prominent part of K.M. COCKIN, *'The Pioneer Players (1911–25): a cultural history'* (Ph.D., University of Leicester, 1994) [ASLIB]. The Pioneer Players were a predominantly female, London-based play-producing subscription society whose history provides an interesting insight into the relationship between culture and early twentieth-century feminism. Distinguished by two phases, the society moved from an early interest in suffrage-related drama, which represented women as workers and resisting marriage, towards experiments in art theatre, characterized by an increase in the numbers of translated and male-authored plays. These trends indicate the tensions created by the society's appeal to both a middle-class and female constituency, and the shift from attempts to represent all women to a concern with supporting the career of the society's director, Edith Craig. In this respect, the changes which the society underwent reflect the tendencies of many middle-class suffragists who subscribed to the need for female role models in different professions in order to establish women's eligibility for the vote.

This concern with the politics of feminist culture is continued in two recent University of York theses. H. ROGERS, 'Poetesses and politicians: gender, knowledge and power in radical culture, 1830–1870' (Ph.D., University of York, 1995) [ASLIB], by illustrating how questions of knowledge and power were of major concern to women in different radical communities in the years 1830 to 1870, contests the view that radical women saw themselves primarily as auxiliaries to men. Focusing on women active in London free-thought, Chartism, the radical Unitarianism of South Place and the literary, reforming and women's rights circles of mid-century, it explores their understanding of 'rights', 'duties', 'power' and 'influence' and the different ways they shaped ideas of education and politics. Drawing on women's autobiographical writing in political addresses and formal memoirs the thesis analyses the successes and failures of women to politicize their experience of family, social position, work, religion, education and desire. However, by exploring the debates about work in the London needle trades it reveals the extent to which working-class women were excluded from this process by a group of middle-class radicals unable to conceive of lower-class women acting for themselves. Bringing the debate forward and shifting its spatial focus from the metropolis to the provincial city, K. COWMAN, '“Engendering citizenship”: the political involvement of women on Merseyside, 1890–1920' (Ph.D., University of York, 1995) [ASLIB] compares three models of political activity, developed from contemporary theories about women's political roles, with their practice as experienced by those women who sought political activity at a local level in turn-of-the-century Merseyside. By examining a broad range of organizations, from the women's sections of national political parties, such as the Women's Liberal Federation, through to the various suffrage societies, it attempts to assess how successful the three models were at providing women with opportunities to participate in public politics, over both a short- and long-term basis. Its findings suggest that apparently woman-friendly organizations, such as socialist parties, often failed to thrive at the local level, whilst seemingly hierarchical groups, like the WSPU, proved very flexible in a local context.

The issue of gender and power in the classical world, early modern Germany and nineteenth-century Scotland forms the basis of the next four studies in the report. The limits and extent of women's agency in a period of substantial change is explored in K. MANTAS, 'Civic decline and female power: women's new position in the Greek world under Roman rule' (Ph.D., University of Bristol, 1995) [ASLIB]. This study assesses six aspects of the lives of women in the Roman East between the first and third centuries AD. Women's power is considered by analysis of the position and influence of women in the imperial household and women's roles in local politics as benefactresses and imperial officials. Their economic situation is explored through an examination of female land ownership, women in business and their involvement in ancient occupations, whilst consideration is given to the changing position of women in the public sphere. The thesis also attempts to define the contribution of women to religious life and the changes which were forced upon the institution of marriage by the new economic and social conditions of the Roman East. Women as the object of male power in the context of rapid economic and religious flux is also a central concern of U. RUBBLACK, 'Women and crime in south-west Germany, 1500–1700' (Ph.D., University of Cambridge, 1995) [ASLIB]. Based on Protestant

Wurttemberg and five medium-sized imperial cities of differing confessional beliefs and socio-economic structures, this thesis provides the first systematic study of female crime (excluding witchcraft) in early modern Europe. The study reveals that the ability of the civic and state authorities to prosecute female offenders was highly dependent on communal co-operation, leading them to adapt their moral goals to those of the population at large. Thus the main targets of trial and punishment were social outsiders – professional thieves, those who had extra-marital sex and those committing infanticide – suggesting a moralism aimed at strengthening the institutions of family, household and guild in the face of economic changes which undermined their integrative social functions. Within this context the study explores women's material conditions and social conflicts and their experiences of and resistance to the rigidity of social and moral policies.

A. ROWLANDS, 'Women, gender and power in Rothenburg ob der Tauber and its rural environs, 1500–c.1618' (Ph.D., University of Cambridge, 1995) [ASLIB] explores similar themes in a study of gender and power in early modern Rothenburg ob der Tauber, a medium-sized Franconian town with jurisdiction over a sizeable rural hinterland. Setting the relationships of gender and power and the actions and fates of women in the context of the interplay of city/village relationships, it examines the nature of women's power in various contexts (verbal, physical, political, marital and sexual) to establish the degree to which it was circumscribed by other power systems such as physical and sexual violence, gender stereotypes, the law and the normative precepts inculcated by religion. These relationships are then analysed over time to identify the extent to which the power of women was affected by male-implemented legal and religious changes such as the adoption of the imperial law code and Lutheranism. Taking a rather different focus for the discussion of women and power relations, **N.J. CROCKETT, 'Home at work: the structuring of women's employment in late nineteenth century Dundee'** (Ph.D., University of Edinburgh, 1994) [ASLIB] addresses the theoretical debate over the best way to explain patterns of gender inequality, and in particular the processes which led to women's unpaid labour in the home and their experience of segregation and low pay in the labour market. Highlighting the inadequacy of a number of theoretical positions, the study notes the central problem as being the abstract level at which the development of explanations has been carried out. Rejecting the tendency of contributors to the debate to focus on a few symbolic occurrences in the nineteenth century, such as protective legislation, male trade unionist exclusivism and the family wage, it suggests that advances in theoretical explanation can only be achieved by a thorough empirical examination of the wider context in which women labour.

As the last study indicates, economic change in the urban arena continues to occupy a significant place in urban history, whether medieval, early modern or modern. Moving away from the traditional concern with the economic fortunes of large towns in the medieval period, **R.B. PEBERDY, 'The economy, society, and government of a small town in late medieval England: a study of Henley-on-Thames from c.1300 to c.1540'** (Ph.D., University of Leicester, 1994) [ASLIB] seeks to illuminate the lower part of the urban hierarchy through an investigation into economic functions; trading and social relationships between town, hinterland, and the wider world; and accompanying developments in social structure and government. The study shows that, though founded in the tenth century for

non-commercial reasons, Henley's good communications made it a thriving trading centre which passed through four main phases in the later Middle Ages. Notwithstanding the fact that each of these phases was dominated by exporting (mostly grain) the early period did also witness an effective craft-work sector, leading to the conclusion that the history of the town in the late medieval period was shaped by changing external demand for hinterland products and the hinterland's response to those demands. Moving on in time and widening the geographical focus of the research, K. DAWSON, 'Town defences in early modern England' (Ph.D., University of Exeter, 1995) [ASLIB] seeks to counter the widespread assumption that although town defences remained important in the early modern townscape, they were archaic relic features, surviving from the medieval era only because of their physical inertia. Instead it suggests that, as in the medieval period, town defences could play an important part in the social and administrative life of towns until at least the end of the seventeenth century, long after their military function had been undermined. In particular, case studies of Exeter, Southampton and Bristol indicate that the most important role of the defences throughout the early modern period was to control access to the town as part of an explicit strategy employed by town governors to control population. However, as this examination indicates, the move away from territory-based strategies in the eighteenth century saw the decline in the importance of defences and their rapid removal from the townscape. This relationship between economic development and urban topography is further explored in R.T. SIMMONS, 'Steam, steel and Lizzie the Elephant: the steel industry, transport technology and urban development in Sheffield, 1800-1914' (Ph.D., University of Leicester, 1995) [ASLIB]. This thesis examines the relationship between the development of transport systems and manufacturing technology, and the effect of these and other factors on industrial location within cities. Approached through a case study of Sheffield and its steel industry, the scene is set by a comparison of industrial location and urban theories. Following a description of the general development of Sheffield, the distribution of the steel industry is plotted decennially with supporting analysis of contemporary data which suggest reasons for location decisions. The development of goods and passenger transport is examined along with case studies of the development of an industrial suburb and the establishment of a steel works. The conclusion suggests that industrialists usually perceived their location decisions as economically rational, based on the weighing of variables such as the cost and convenience of goods transport; access to labour; the unfettered ability to pollute; availability of large, level sites; plus some intangibles. However, landowners could be influential in the shaping of the industrial landscape, planning industrial developments, controlling land uses and reserving land speculatively, thus restricting the ability of the steel industry to choose sites freely and develop rational plant layout.

The creation, development and maintenance of the administrative and institutional structures of towns and cities is another enduring feature of current urban history research. However, there is certainly some change in the emphasis of the studies in this field away from party politics and sanitation towards aspects such as the development of civil society and the creation of municipal and voluntary policing structures. The first study in this selection, E.H. BISPHAM, 'Rome and Italy: municipalisation between the Social War and Actium in its political context' (D.Phil., University of Oxford, 1994) [ASLIB] is concerned with the

means by which Roman corporate towns were created and in particular the legal framework within which municipalization took place, the constitutional forms in which it manifested itself and the significance of the municipal system for the Italians. The study focuses on three themes, the beginnings of municipalization, the charters of the individual communities – which embodied much of the particular identity of the community and enshrined its traditions and privileges with a constitution – and the quattuorvirate, a political *tabula rasa* for the new citizen communities, allowing all to begin life as Roman political communities on the same footing, but to evolve as they needed. Holding this system together was the magistracy which developed at differing speeds across the peninsula, providing sufficient flexibility for the needs of large and small communities alike. In contrast to this picture of a responsive and appropriate municipal structure, the contested nature of civic development in the early nineteenth century is the subject of two new studies. A.E. KOLACZKIWSKI, 'The politics of civic improvement: Bath 1835–1879, with special reference to the career of Sir Jerom Murch' (Ph.D., University of Bath, 1995) [ASLIB], assesses Bath's response to the improvement imperative of the mid-nineteenth century, focusing in particular on the effects of central legislation and parliamentary elections, the sources of local improvement initiatives, the scope of policy and accompanying changes in the definition of the civic role. The structure and connections of the local elite are considered to identify the place of improving councillors within local networks of interest. Taking a largely chronological approach, the study emphasizes the importance of Sir Jerom Murch and his improvement scheme in allowing the city to overcome the constraints of municipal procedure, ratepayer opposition, the existing facilities, self-image and class antagonisms and develop, by the 1870s, a civic consciousness through which the council acknowledged its role as innovative agent of social improvement. Focusing on similar themes, though in a rather different context, S.C. OLIVER, 'The administration of urban society in Scotland, 1800–50, with reference to the growth of civic government in Glasgow and its suburbs' (Ph.D., University of Glasgow, 1995) [ASLIB] considers the impact of rapid industrialization and urbanization on the administrative structures of Glasgow and the neighbouring areas of Anderston, Calton and the Gorbals, and in particular the important but highly contested issue of Local Acts. The development of a system of Police Commissioners, and the conflicts over who should meet the cost and who reap the benefits of the new Police Establishments, is placed within a wider context, especially the influence of the Enlightenment and Evangelicalism on concepts of civic duty; public perceptions of rising crime; and comparisons with the contemporary situation in both England and Wales and Edinburgh. The meaning and political impact of the exercise of such local power in the Scottish context is of central importance to G. MORTON, 'Unionist-nationalism: the historical construction of Scottish national identity, Edinburgh 1830–1860' (Ph.D., University of Edinburgh, 1994) [ASLIB]. Through an exploration of the relationship between the British state and Scottish civil society in the mid-nineteenth century, this study aims to reconceptualize the state/civil society axis around which the formation of national identity hangs. In particular, it highlights the way the unitary British state gave powers to the local state and the urban bourgeoisie to such an extent that Westminster was not the prime focus of 'governing' Scottish civil society and that the degree of autonomy exercised by the Edinburgh bourgeoisie over the day-to-

day running of the institutions of civil society is vital to understanding Scottish national identity at the time. By demonstrating the range and extent of bourgeois control over Edinburgh and their ability to govern without resort to a Scottish parliament, the thesis challenges the dominant interpretation of nineteenth-century national identity as weak romanticism and provides a new reading of the rhetoric and symbols of Scottish national identity. Whilst Morton links history and sociology to show the significance of urban politics and administration to the development of a 'national' political culture, V. VOLKOV, 'The forms of public life: the public sphere and the concept of society in Imperial Russia' (Ph.D., University of Glasgow, 1995) [ASLIB] utilizes the concept of the urban public sphere to chart the rise of a literary/political culture in the major cities of nineteenth-century Russia. Drawing on sources such as etiquette manuals, rules for public gatherings, dress-codes, public space and generic structures of language, the thesis charts the creation of the public realm and changes in the public behaviour of the Russian aristocracy in the eighteenth century. By focusing on the aristocratic public sphere – the salon society of Petersburg and Moscow in the early nineteenth century – the study highlights the transition from conversation and refined manners to literary or political criticism with the attendant transformation of public life exemplified by the development of literary circles, a literary aristocracy and literary criticism. Finally the study shows the way the structures of public life were further affected by the development of the printed press in the second half of the nineteenth century, leading to the increasing politicization of the public sphere and the transposition of public interaction from the local setting of face-to-face encounters to an expanding realm of impersonal and disembodied communication.

Moving back from these more theoretical discussions of the significance of urban political discourse to the level of policy implementation we find a number of studies concerned with specific aspects of urban administration and/or the relationships and conflicts generated between local and national government. I.P. GLEAVE, 'The administration of education in Manchester, 1902–1914' (Ph.D., University of Manchester, 1994) [ASLIB] explores the development of educational provision in Manchester from the mid-nineteenth century through the establishment of the new educational structures of 1902 to the outbreak of the First World War. It reveals that, in major urban areas, the transition of the administration of education from school boards to a committee of the council could be smooth and efficient, with little difficulty experienced in either the supply of education or religious matters. Crucial to this smooth transition were relationships developed in the nineteenth century, which allowed considerable continuity with the ethos of the old school board and the experience of administering the Technical Instruction Committee, a venture which had established close links between the local authority and the school board by the time of the Balfour Act. A rather different story is presented in two studies addressing the development of council housing. Though adopting rather different methodological approaches, both are primarily interested in the relationship between Conservative governments ambiguous about the merits of municipal housing and local authorities attempting to implement housing policy in an environment which was often hostile. Thus, D. BACKWITH, 'The death of municipal socialism: the politics of council housing in Sheffield and Bristol, 1919–1939' (Ph.D., University of Bristol, 1995) [ASLIB] utilizes case studies of two cities with rather different

experiences of Labour administration to develop an historical perspective on recent conflicts over housing policy between Conservative governments and Labour local authorities. Whilst Sheffield, an exemplar of municipal socialism, with almost continuous Labour administrations from 1926, promoted council housing as a socialist alternative to private landlordism, the later rise to power of Labour in Bristol produced a more moderate housing policy, which differed from that of the previous administration only by degree. This changing agenda was rooted, it is suggested, in the changing social bases of working-class politics, principally the shift from a trade union, industrial base to one centred on working-class neighbourhoods where gender relations and women's organization were central to the consolidation of Labour support. Although Labour housing policies were often limited by Conservative attempts to promote the restoration of the private housing market, these Tory ambitions were frustrated by the failure of the private sector to produce adequate low cost housing. A.G.V. SIMMONDS, 'Conservative governments and the housing question, 1951-1959' (Ph.D., University of Leeds, 1995) [ASLIB] brings the story forward to the post-war period by an examination of the motives and consequences of Conservative housing policy in the 1950s at both a local and national level. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach to housing as an agency of political and social priorities, it assesses the ideological and practical development of Tory policy, the framework within which housing policy operated, and case studies of the application of housing policy in three localities taken to be representative of the country as a whole. The study suggests that the political and social idealism of post-war housing policy was broken down, first as a conscious act of political policy, second through the process of implementation by local authorities operating within the social and legislative framework of town and country planning, and third through the re-emergence of social divisions and a public attitude that leaned towards individualism and libertarianism.

The battles over education and housing have come to occupy a prominent position in the political, social and urban history of modern Britain, but a relatively new aspect of urban administration to attract the attention of historians is the development and exercising of police authority. Two of this year's theses tackle this topic in very different temporal and spatial contexts. M.L. BRETAS, 'You can't! The daily exercise of police authority in Rio de Janeiro: 1907-1930' (Ph.D., Open University, 1995) [ASLIB] shows the ambiguous social, political and administrative position occupied by the police in a modern urban society. Though initially central to the ambitions of elite intellectuals attempting to build a modern city, when the impetus to reform waned the police were left without resources to carry on their modernizing role and had to develop systems based on their daily experience. By paying close attention to daily police activity, and to their contacts with the Chief of Police, the local elite and the poor citizens, this thesis illustrates the means by which policemen developed their worldview and procedures, and defined the extent and limits of their powers. It explains how they built their place in the networks of patronage that permeated Rio's society and how they combined an unchecked power to deal with those they classified the criminal classes with an attitude of subservience to the powerful. Although addressing the topic in a slightly different way, D.J. OAKENSEN, 'The origins and development of policing in Brighton and Hove, 1830-1900, with special reference to local political control' (Ph.D., University of Brighton, 1994) [ASLIB]

identifies very similar developments in two geographically adjacent, but frequently economically, socially and politically disparate British coastal towns. These structural differences acted to create separate police forces by the 1850s, each with its roots in developments several decades earlier. In politically turbulent Brighton, where the structures of local government were heavily overloaded, the power and social status of the high constable was crucial, whilst in Hove, a more cohesive local government structure developed to serve the needs of an upper-class housing enclave in the parish. Yet in both cases old and new forms of local government – courts leet, parish vestries and improvement commissioners – interacted to shape and change the policing authority. Though stability had been established in both towns by the 1850s, the history of competing interests had created decision-making voids opportunistically occupied by an emergent cadre of professional senior police officers. Local politicians increasingly ceded decision-making powers to these senior police officers who created policing structures apparently suited to local needs. Local autonomy was jealously guarded – with interference from East Sussex constabulary resented and that of the Inspectorate of Constabulary barely tolerated – whilst the police authorities rarely questioned their chief officers, except for occasional attempts at economy.

The institutional development of police forces provides one avenue by which historians are currently exploring the control and regulation of the urban environment. Another equally fruitful approach is found in the study of voluntary organizations dedicated to the relief and reform of individuals and groups identified as deviant by contemporaries. P.A. BARTLEY, *“Seeking and saving”: the reform of prostitutes and the prevention of prostitution in Birmingham, 1860–1914* (Ph.D., University of Wolverhampton, 1995) [ASLIB] provides a detailed investigation of the attitudes and actions of the various preventative and reformatory voluntary organizations concerned with prostitution in late nineteenth-century Birmingham. It suggests that though both types of organization were characterized by structural differences of gender, religion and class, which could be both contradictory and complementary, there were substantial similarities in the ends all activists sought. Thus, among the ‘reformers’, both the Anglican Magdalen Asylum and the nonconformist alternative inspired by the vision of Ellice Hopkins, attempted to train working-class women for domestic service. Similarly, the organizations established to provide a moral safety net for young women by eliminating the causes of prostitution – immoral behaviour, unemployment, illegitimacy, homelessness and mental deficiency – though drawing on distinct constituencies and adopting differing means to those of the reformers, shared a common aim of recasting working-class women into modest, industrious and subordinate individuals. Taking a rather more institutional approach to the problem of mendicants in eighteenth-century France, N. SUMNER, *‘Poverty and charity in the ancien regime: the Hospitals-General of Albi and Castres, 1689–1765’* (Ph.D., University of Leeds, 1994) [ASLIB] explores the relative fortunes, administration and actions of the Hospitals-General established in 1689 in two socially, economically and religiously diverse Languedocian towns. These new institutions were part of a national movement to enclose and reform the mendicant poor. Though performing a public function, they were largely independent, privately administered and dependent on private finance leading to a lack of uniformity and persistent inequality of resources – as

indicated by the fortunes of the two institutions studied. Analysis of admission registers, minutes, inspectors' reports and account books for the period reveals that neither hospital fulfilled the role originally envisaged for it, both continuing to provide domiciliary assistance whilst the local elite, under pressure from limited space and limited resources, tolerated begging and interned few able-bodied mendicants. The profile of most inmates – mainly children, old people, women and the sick – suggests the hospitals' primary role was that of asylum, though the reformatory ideals were not entirely repudiated, as indicated by the quasi-monastic workhouse regime. Their essentially municipal nature meant they did little to remedy the perceived problem of the vagrant poor, only cracked down on migrant adult mendicants when subsidized by the government, and even then proved ineffective as prisons. Thus, when the government renewed its attack on vagrancy after 1765, new state-funded and -run institutions were set up to fulfil its plans.

Scholarly interest in the emergence of voluntary institutions as the panacea for urban social problems in the years after 1650 has merged with the current vogue for the social history of medicine to produce a mini-boom in the history of the eighteenth-century voluntary hospital. Drawing on detailed and critical analysis of in- and out-patient registers, infirmary documents and publications, B. BOSS, *'The Bristol Infirmary 1761–2 and the "laborious-industrious poor"'* (Ph.D., University of Bristol, 1995) [ASLIB] provides a detailed account of the general and therapeutic treatment of patients in the hospital over the course of a year and relates the treatment regime to the power relationships bearing upon it. The infirmary was a major feature of Bristol life, with a purpose and regime distinct from the medical and surgical provisions of the poor law. It accepted patients irrespective of provenance – though restricted to those likely to benefit within three months – whilst patient treatment was humane, and even therapeutically effective in many cases, with moral improvement secondary to healing. The study shows that a simplistic theory of self-interest is insufficient in itself to account for the public giving which made the infirmary possible, and asks questions about the effectiveness of government by amateurs and the relationship between the voluntary hospital sector and the poor law. Some of these issues are explored in a wider context by A.J. BERRY, *'Patronage, funding and the hospital patient c.1750–1815: three English regional case studies'* (D.Phil., University of Oxford, 1995) [ASLIB] which takes as its cases the Bristol Infirmary, the Devon and Exeter Hospital and the hospital at Northampton to evaluate the philanthropic provision of institutional health care within the broader framework of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century society. Investigation of the three core issues was facilitated by the creation of a relational database of hospital patrons and patients and spreadsheets of hospital financial accounts. These revealed that patrons were not a homogeneous group, but that patronage was more subtle and varied, including both individual and corporate subscribers who together demonstrate the diverse way in which local elites collectively dealt with the problem of the growing number of sick poor. Analysis of the finances illustrated their resilience in weathering both national and local economic fluctuations and the diversity of each hospital's approach to 'balancing the books', whilst investigation of patron and patient records revealed regional variations in the practice of patient sponsorship. Admission records provided evidence of patients' social and demographic characteristics and demonstrated

that each hospital treated a wide range of diseases. B. CROXSON, 'An economic analysis of a voluntary hospital: the foundation and institutional structure of the Middlesex Hospital, 1745–1864' (Ph.D., University of Cambridge, 1995) [ASLIB] adopts a rather different approach, utilizing the New Institutional Economics to analyse material drawn from the archives of the Middlesex Hospital and some other medical charities and relate the historical evidence to modern health policy. Divided into three papers, the first addresses the foundation of the hospital and shows that, though the impetus came from medical professionals and politicians, principal decision-making lay with the benefactors who funded the hospital and that their support for the hospital was rational as most had a number of objectives which could be met through association with voluntary hospitals. The second section charts the changing medical market at the end of the eighteenth century, and especially the establishment of a number of dispensaries which attracted both out-patients and benefactors from voluntary hospitals. These dispensaries, it is contended, were able to attract ongoing support from two groups of benefactors – those who wanted to support a charity with a higher turnover of patients than the voluntary hospital and those who could not afford to subscribe to a voluntary hospital.

Finally, two theses culled from a growing number of studies produced by geographers, economists and architecture students interested in the economic and social implications of the recent regeneration of Britain's industrial cities. M. MCATEER, 'The rehabilitation of Glasgow: an analysis of the processes and issues of housing rehabilitation in the city of Glasgow, 1968–1992' (Ph.D., University of Strathclyde, 1994) [ASLIB] examines the formation of housing rehabilitation policies in Scotland, focusing on the role played by Glasgow City Council in conjunction with other key actors such as the Housing Corporation/Scottish Homes and the Scottish Development Department to provide a complete picture of the consultative processes in the development of this major policy area. Particular emphasis was placed upon the successive nature of the policy process and the manner in which both the actions of the key actors and the concept of Thatcherism were tempered by that process. The main conclusion of the thesis is that the policy emerged as a result of a series of sophisticated and dynamic relationships between key actors and the successive nature of the policy process as opposed to simply being the product of government initiative inspired by ideology. Though concerned with a very similar process, Z. TANG, 'Social processes and spatial reconfiguration: urban transformation in Liverpool, 1981–1991' (Ph.D., University of Liverpool, 1995) [ASLIB] adopts a more explicitly theoretical approach which attempts to merge the sociological and geographical imaginations to provide a satisfactory approach to the issue of urban transformation. The methodology developed contained two propositions, the first emphasizing the shaping of urban transformation by the operation and interrelation of spheres such as the economy, civil society and the state, and the second foregrounding the importance of the locality and the experience of uneven development produced both externally and locally. This model is then applied to the situation in Liverpool in the 1980s, highlighting a range of significant processes under the headings of economic restructuring, political intervention, social conflict and spatial transformation, concluding that the relationship between social processes in different spheres is interactive.